

The Continuing Slaughter of Marine Mammals

Spoiling Japan's Appetite for Whale Meat



Sperm whale. ©HIROYA MINAKUCHI/MINDEN PICTURES

Ending the Canadian seal hunt remains a major focus of our international efforts to protect marine mammals, but growing pressure on other warm-blooded ocean vertebrates and on marine ecosystems is also a significant concern of Humane Society International (HSI). Despite the global moratorium on commercial whaling, Japan continued to thumb its nose at the humane and conservation communities and at nations that oppose the practice. Under the guise of scientific research, it killed some 1,200 minke, sei, sperm, Bryde's, and fin whales for human consumption and pet food, along with some 20,000 Dall's porpoises and other small cetaceans.

We worked closely with the International Whaling Commission and member governments to try and end the Japanese slaughter. Joining with Greenpeace and the Environmental Investigation Agency, we successfully pressured the Japanese company Kyodo Senpaku to end its whaling operations and its parent company Nissui, one of the country's biggest whale meat distributors, to get out of this odious business.

We also convinced 7-Eleven in Japan to stop selling whale, dolphin, and porpoise products in its 1,300 stores. Our continued work with Japanese supermarkets has reduced cetacean product sales by at least \$6 million.

Precipitous declines in global shark populations are wreaking ecological havoc on marine ecosystems. Close to 75 million sharks are killed each year to supply fins for soup in a brutal and wasteful harvest where the animals are tossed overboard to drown or bleed to death. A workshop organized by HSI and a Costa Rican partner resulted in



Japanese whaler. ©JEREMY SUTTON-HIBBERT/HANDOUT/EPA/CORBIS

the establishment of a seven-nation Coalition for Sharks to implement finning legislation in South and Central America and lobby the United Nations for stronger controls.

A campaign conducted with local groups in the Netherlands Antilles halted the planned construction of a dolphin aquarium in St. Maarten. In Mexico, we joined local activists in a successful effort to ban imports and exports of marine mammals for subsistence and commercial purposes.

In Peru, HSI has been partnering with a local organization to stem the illegal killing of dolphins along the country's Pacific coastline. In 2006, we conducted undercover investigations into local markets selling illegal dolphin meat and held three workshops to train 115 police officers. In addition, we led raids of illegal dolphin markets in Lima and Trujillo, where three vendors were arrested and some 120 pounds of dolphin meat confiscated.

Effective lobbying with our allies also helped influence the U.S. Congress to divert funding for an anti-submarine warfare training range off the Carolinas and finance a full environmental analysis of its impact on marine mammals. Other HSUS marine wildlife programs helped to protect U.S. and Russian polar bears, dolphins in the Dominican Republic, and endangered marine turtles in Bali, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic.

HSI: Our Growing Overseas Commitment

Humane Society International, active in more than 35 nations, trained scores of veterinarians, technicians, and dog catchers in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan in rabies vaccination, sterilization, emergency rescue, and other veterinary medical skills. Thousands of high school students and others in India, Kenya, and Peru were exposed to animal welfare issues through our support of humane education programs.

Last year, we promoted bird conservation and sustainable bird watching tourism in El Salvador and collected population data with local group SalvaNATURA for more than 150 terrestrial bird species found in two national parks. HSI also trained local community members to serve as guides for park tourists.

In Bali, we completed the final segment of a three-year model Animal Welfare Training (AWT) initiative and worked closely with religious leaders and government officials to establish humane slaughter programs compatible with Islamic halal rules that govern killing methods. Malaysia, Sumatra, and Thailand have expressed interest in similar training programs involving humane transport and slaughter. We also marked the second year of conducting intensive workshops in this critical area of animal welfare in Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

Indigenous communities in the Australian outback will benefit from new animal welfare programs being developed down under, and an HSI construction grant will help underwrite the rebuilding of a veterinary teaching school in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, that was destroyed in the 2004 tsunami.

In 2006 HSI helped prevent the sale of 60 tons of ivory by three southern African countries. If the sale had been permitted by the organization that regulates international wildlife trade, elephant poaching would have escalated even further.

HSI helped animal victims of the 2006 hostilities between Lebanon and Israel with financial support and expertise, and we assisted with disaster relief efforts following flooding or earthquakes in Europe, Grand Bahamas, India, Indonesia, and Pakistan. Our far-flung programs helped to protect and conserve a wide range of wildlife including painted dogs in Zimbabwe, orangutans in Indonesia, wild birds destined for the European pet trade, and chimpanzees in Sierra Leone and Guinea.



Scientific whaling? ©REUTERS/CORBIS; ©FLIP NICKLIN/MINDEN PICTURES



©GLENWOOD JACKSON

“The world has begun to awaken to the plight of animals. Over the past decades I have seen treaties adopted aimed at saving endangered wildlife, placing

a moratorium on commercial whaling, reducing the killing of fur-bearing animals, and more recently recognizing the need to change animal agriculture practices. None has been easily achieved, and none can be considered final.”

—Patricia Forkan, President, Humane Society International